

43. The production apparatus according to Claim 36, wherein said crucible has a region for mounting a material.

44. The production apparatus according to Claim 36, having a region obtained by superimposing a plurality of crucibles as the region for receiving a material, and having a crucible without a connecting hole as the lowermost stage.--

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Office Action dated February 22, 2000. Claims 1, 2, 27-34 and 36-44 are now presented for examination, of which Claims 1 and 36 are independent claims. Claim 1 has been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Claims 36-44 have been added to provide Applicant a more complete scope of protection. Withdrawn Claims 3-26 and 35 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter presented therein. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-2 were rejected as anticipated by Tokuhara. Claims 27-34 were rejected as

obvious from *Tokuhara* and *Cheredov*. Applicant submits the following comments.

Individual Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a production apparatus for a crystal which has a crucible divided into a plurality of stages. The crucible is used in a process for refining a material by adding thereto a scavenger. The lower portion of a first stage of the plurality of stages is positioned to cover an upper edge of a wall portion of a second stage of the plurality of stages.

Individual Claim 36 is directed to a production apparatus which has a crucible divided into a plurality of stages, wherein a degassing hole is provided in a side wall portion of the crucible. A lower portion of a first stage of the plurality of stages is positioned to cover an upper edge of a wall portion of a second stage of the plurality of stages.

Applicant understands *Tokuhara* as relating to the production of optical fibers, but does not understand it as teaching or suggesting the technology for refining the material. In addition, Applicant submits that nothing in *Tokuhara* would teach or suggest that a scavenger spreads everywhere through the entire material. First, there is no description or suggestion about adding a scavenger for the

purpose of refining the material. Second, as recited in Claims 1 and 36, there is no description or suggestion that a crucible be divided into a plurality of stages wherein a lower portion of a first stage of the plurality of stages is positioned to cover an upper edge of a wall portion of a second stage of the plurality of stages.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that amended independent Claim 1 and 36 are patentable over *Tokuhara*.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against independent Claims 1 and 36 herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

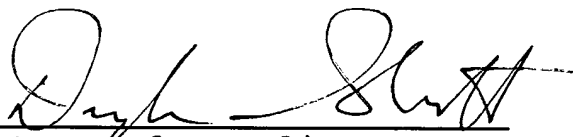
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and

early passage to issue of the present application.

In view of the fact that the only amendments to the claims have been to define more clearly the present invention, Applicant submits that the claims do not raise new issues that would require further search or consideration. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the above amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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